

REMARKS

Applicant has withdrawn claims 1-10 and 28-42. Claims 11-27 are amended. That is, claim 11 is an independent claim which incorporates the limitations set forth in claim 20 and claims related thereto. The Examiner indicated such an amendment will result in allowability. It is noted therefore that claims 11-16 and 21-27 are believed allowable. Passage to allowability of claim 11 and the claims dependent thereon is respectfully requested.

New claims 43-49 have been added. The patentability of these claims is discussed hereinafter. Claim 43 is the independent claim. Claims 44-49 depend therefrom.

Briefly, claim 43 is directed to the embodiment of Figure 14 and the related figures. That is, claim 43 is directed to the combination of a tool belt and at least two tool pouch assemblies. Each of the tool pouch assemblies includes a back panel, top tool belt loop with the tool belt threaded through that loop to support the pouch assemblies for use in the typical manner of a tool belt about the waist of an individual such as a tradesman. Additionally, each of the pouch assemblies includes a generally planar back side panel with a fastening mechanism thereon which enables the tool belt to be detached from the waist of an individual and the pouch assembly is to be fastened together, back to back and supported by a carry handle on the top side of the pouch assembly. Thus, the combination is convertible between utility as a typical tool belt with at least two pouch assemblies attached thereto and a combination of the pouch assemblies joined back to back and transportable by means of a carry handle. The combination includes, therefore, the tool belt, at least two pouch assemblies, the fastening mechanism on the back side of

each of the pouch assemblies, a carry handle associated with at least one of the pouch assemblies and a fastener mechanism for attaching the pouch assemblies together.

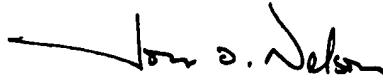
It is believed therefore that the most relevant prior art referenced by the Examiner would be the patent to *Jackson et al.*, U.S. Patent No. 4,580,706, Saddlebag and Associated Mounted Arrangement for Cycles. It is noted that this patent discloses first and second bags which may be placed over the saddle of a motor bike or alternatively joined together, for example, as shown in Figure 6 for purposes of being carried or transported. Figure 7 of the patent discloses a component part of the saddlebag, namely a fanny pack 32 which is affixed to the top of a saddlebag, for example, as illustrated in Figure 1.

In any event, the *Jackson et al.* reference taken alone or in combination with any other reference cited by the Examiner does not demonstrate the combination of a tool belt with first and second tool pouch assemblies wherein the top side thereof includes a belt loop for attachment of a tool belt. Thus, the presently claimed invention contemplates that the tool belt may be retained within the belt loops and the tool pouch assemblies may be joined back to back to be carried by the handles affixed to the top side thereof. Alternatively, the back side panels may be unfastened from one another and the belt may be placed about the waist of the tradesman. As a consequence with the present invention, the tool belt assembly is easily convertible between a configuration where it may be used by the tradesman at a site by placement about the waist of the tradesman, or removed from the waist and joined in the manner with the pouch assemblies back to back so that the tools can be easily carried to another work site.

It is believed therefore that the combination claimed is clearly distinguishable in the context of the component parts that are included to affect the convertibility between a typical tool belt construction and a construction wherein the belt is reconfigured so that it can be easily utilized to transport tools in the pouches of the belt. In view of the foregoing therefore it is believed that the new claims are allowable and that the amended claims previously discussed are also allowable. Favorable consideration is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

BANNER & WTICOFF, LTD.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon O. Nelson", with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

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